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Agenda item 19

IMPLICATIONS OF HUMANITARIAN ACTIVITIES FOR THE ENJOYMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS

Written statement submitted by International Educational Development, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[21 August 1995]

1. International Educational Development/Humanitarian Law Project has been concerned about the armed conflict in Iran between the military forces of the Khomeini regime and the National Liberation Army (NLA) of the National Council of Resistance of Iran. We have also been keenly aware of the situation of the Kurdish people in the area and have raised our concerns, based on our own investigations, in the United Nations human rights forums.

2. We have been distressed because of certain misrepresentations of events in the area, in particular allegations made that the NLA has collaborated with the armed forces of the Government of Iraq, inter alia by participating in attacks against Kurdish people in Kirkuk, Qara Hanjeer, Kifri and Altun Kopir in April 1991. There are also allegations that NLA troops took part in the use of chemical weapons against Kurdish villages, and that they even collaborated earlier with the then Shah against the Kurdish peoples.

3. From our independent investigation and discussion with parties involved, we find these allegations false. Accordingly, we wish to set out the facts as we believe them to be.

4. During the Gulf war, the NLA evacuated the military bases they had in Kurdish areas along the Iran-Iraq border - some in the north and some in the south. They relocated to the middle border area away from Kurdish settlements. The key reason for this costly relocation was to remove themselves from Iraq's internal affairs.

5. After the defeat of the Iraqi forces in the Gulf war, the Iranian regime began a two-pronged initiative to annihilate the NLA and to establish an Iranian-controlled Islamic government in Iraq. In March 1991, Iran sent seven Guard Corps divisions and brigades to attack NLA base camps on the border. However, these were heavily defeated by NLA fighters. Six of the Iranian soldiers captured by the NLA wore Kurdish dress. At the same time, the Iranian regime sought to hire Iraqi Kurds to fight against the NLA, and in the Kurdish areas demolished the abandoned NLA camps.

6. The "Kurdish" prisoners of war (who were in fact Iranians) held by the NLA were subsequently presented to the International Committee of the Red Cross, and they conceded that the Iranian regime was trying to recruit Kurds to fight the NLA. The prisoners were released by order of M. Rajavi, Commander-in-Chief of the NLA and extensive documentation as well as film footage and photographs were also made available to the public about these events.

7. The NLA and the National Resistance Council of Iran sent messages to Kurdish groups in Iraq indicating that they had no interest whatsoever in interfering with them or in their own struggles. They reiterated that their only objective was directed at the Khomeini regime and stressed that they had relocated to central border areas away from the Kurds.

8. This communication follows a pattern of good relations between the NLA, the National Resistance Council of Iran and Kurdish people and their leaders in Iraq. Resistance leaders have met with leaders of the Iraq Kurdish Democratic Party (led by Mr. Barzani) and freely associates with other Kurdish groups in Iraq, Europe, the United States and at United Nations sessions.

9. Most of the allegations made against the NLA regarding the Kurdish people come from a man named Jamshid Tafrishi-Enginee, who was cited by people at this session of the Sub-Commission as a former leader of the Iranian resistance. Our investigation indicates that Mr. Tafrishi-Enginee joined the resistance in 1988, but left after 19 months with a low rank. In his letter of resignation, handwritten and dated 23 September 1990, he cites personal problems and requests leave to transfer to a refugee camp. He then travelled to Europe where he began to campaign publicly against the NLA. There is compelling evidence that he is in fact an agent of the Khomeini regime's Ministry of Intelligence.

10. IED/HLP has first-hand experience that the Khomeini regime seeks to draw attention away from the civil war in Iran - in fact the regime has fought diligently to keep all mention of the war and application of humanitarian law out of United Nations reports and resolutions on the situation in Iran. The regime attempts to make the international community believe the NLA is really fighting the Kurdish people in Iraq and as such is a pawn of the Iraq regime. We present this assessment of these events because in our view, misinformation must be challenged and true facts presented in the interest of sound and honest evaluation of events in Iran and of the civil war raging there.